The National Festival

THE CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING DAY AS WE KNOW IT IS AN AMERICAN CUSTOM. ALTHOUGH THE PRACTICE IS BY NO MEANS UNIQUE, OUR PARTICULAR WAY OF OBSERVING IS AN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION. BUT AT THIS POINT I MUST ISSUE A WARNING. ~~IT IS A DANGEROUS~~ Americans Frequently ~~THING~~ TO IDENTIFY GOD'S WILL WITH THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE U.S. ALL TOO FREQUENTLY WE CONSIDER OURSELVES TO BE GOD'S FAVORITES, -Partners WE ARE SURE HE IS ON OUR SIDE. THIS IS NOT ONLY THE HEIGHTH OF EGO CENTRICITY AND PRIDE BUT ALSO QUITE UNCHRISTIAN. I POINT THIS OUT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS SO VERY EASY TO TURN THANKSGIVING INTO A FESTIVAL OF NATIONAL ARROGANCE. WE HAVE BEEN RICHLY BLESSED, BUT AS WE THANK GOD FOR OUR NATION WE MUST REALIZE THAT WITH OUR BELSSINGS GO RESPONSIBILITIES RESPONSIBILITIES THAT IN MANY CASES HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED.

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IS BASED ON THE HIGHEST IDEALS MAN HAS EVER CONCEIVED AND TRIED THE WRITTERS OF THE CONSTITUTION CAME FROM A WIDE BACKGROUND, CULTURALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY AND DRAWING ON ALL THE WEALTH OF THEIR RICH HERITAGES THEY COLLECTIVELY PRODUCED IDEAS FOR WHICH WE MUST BE ETERNALLY THANKFUL. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ALL MEN: THESE IMPLICATIONS WERE NOT STATED DIRECTLY BUT WERE SO PRESENT IN THE TONE OF THE DOCUMENT THAT YEARS LATER ABRAHAM LINCOLN TOOK A STAND THAT HAS MADE HIM PERHAPS THE WORLD'S BEST KNOWN AND MOST LOVED POLITICAL FIGURE. FREEDOM AND LIBERTY - THEY HAD BEEN TRIED BEFORE BUT NEVER WITH SUCH COURAGE AND DETERMINATION. IN THE AMERICAN EXP* ERIMENT THE VALIDITY OF THESE IDEALS WAS PROVEN FOR THE WORLD TO SEE. SURELY ON THANKSGIVING WE MUST EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR THE MEN AND THE MINDS THAT

are responsible FOR THE PRIVILEGES WE ENJOY.

JESUS ONCE TOLD A PARABLE ABOUT A MAN THAT GAVE HIS SERVANTS 10, 5 qnd 1 TALENT. THE TWO FORMER SERVANTS DOUBLED THEIR TALENTS, THE LATTER HID HIS IN THE GROUND. AND FOR HIS ACTIONS WAS SEVERELY CHASTISED. THE POINT IS CLEAR - GOD GIVEN TALENTS OR GIFTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN FREEDOM, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, WE DID NOT WIN THEM OR EARN THEM, THEY CAME TO US AS A MATTER OF BIRTH. AND IT IS CLEARLY OUR GOD GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE THESE GIFTS , TO EXTEND OUR FREEDOM, OUR IDEALS OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.

IT IS A SOBERING FACT TO REALIZE THAT IN THE TIME WE ARE SITTING HERE, ONE HOUR, 720 HUMAN BEINGS WILL HAVE DIED OF STARVATION. EVERY 5 SECONDS, SOME ONE SOME WHERE DIES BECAUSE HE HAS NEVER HAD ENOUGH TO EAT. IT IS EQUALLY DISTURBING TO REALIZE THAT THE STORED FOOD THAT ROTS EACH YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES, ENGLAND, FRANCE AND W. GERMANY IS ENOUGH TO FEED 150 MILLION PERSONS FOR AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME. IT IS DISTURBING TO WONDER WHAT EQUALITY MEANS TO AN INDIVIDUAL THAT HAPPENED TO BE BORN WITH A DARKER SHADE OF SKIN. IT IS DISTURBING TO SEE THE IMPRESSION SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SHERE HAVE ON THE WORLDS YOUNG NATIONS. WE LOVE ALL MANKIND AND WE W ANT TO HELP FEED THE STARVING MILLIONS AS LONG AS WE APPROVE OF THEIR POLITICS. WHAT DO STARVING PEASANTS IN SOUTH AMERICA THINK WHAN THEY ARE TOLD HOW MUCH THE U.S. WANTS TO HELP THEM WHEN ALL THE HELP THEY CAN SEE IS IN THE FORM OF GUNS AND TANKS. IN GHANA WE

- some time ago

5 But having decided that their government, which at that time was relatively moderate, didn't meet with our approval we backed out of the Project. Needless to say the Sov. Union capitalized on our insincerity.

pledged our help in BUILDING A DESPERATELY NEEDED DAM. ~~BUT NOW WE ARE NOT SO SURE,~~

~~WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEIR GOVERNMENT MEETS WITH OUR APPROVAL~~. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO

A POVERTY STRICKEN FARMER WHO IS WAITING FOR WATER TO IRRIGATE HIS FIELDS.

7 LET US NOT BE TRITE THIS EVENING OF ALL EVENINGS: LET US NOT THANK GOD FOR

MAKING US BETTER. LET US THANK HIM FOR RICHLY BLESSING OUR NATION, LET US PRAY THAT

HE WILL GUIDE OUR LEADERS BRINGING THEM TO RESPONSIBILITY: LET US PRAY FOR THOSE WHO

HAPPEN NOT TO BE AS FORTUNATE AS WE.

What does it mean to us - as with one hand we hold out Food and hope and concern: and with the other hand we clutch to our bosom national arrogance, suspicion and hate.

The Religious Festival

READ PSALM 100.

WHAT MORE CAN ONE SAY THAN WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE HUNDRETH PSALM? [redacted] THE MOST IMPORTANT VERSE IN THAT PSALM IS ~~THE ONE THAT GOES~~ "KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD". I WANT TO CONSIDER THAT STATEMENT FOR A MOMENT ALOMG WITH ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS.

IT IS THE ACCEPTED THING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO BELIEVE IN GOD: NO QUESTIONS ASKED: IT'S JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO. AND WHAT KIND OF A GOD IS HE? OUR POPULAR SONGS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN OUTRAGEOUS BLASPHEMY - ("THE MAN UPSTAIRS, THE OLD MASTER PAINTER, I BELIEVE AND SO ON. HOLLYWOOD PERSISTS IN MAKING A FARCE OUT OF THE ~~XXXX~~ CHRISTIAN FAITH. EACH RELIGIOUS DRAMA MAKES MORE MONEY THAN THE ONE BEFORE: EACH HAS A BIGGER CAST: EACH TAKES ALITTLE MORE LIBERTY WITH THE FACTS: AND EACH FAILS IN THE ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES THAT CAN NEVER BE RECREATED AS PUBLIC EHTERTAINMENT. PERHAPS THE MOST ABSURD STATEMENT, AND THE ONE THAT BEST REVEALS HOW VERY LITTLE THE WORD GOD MEANS TO ~~US~~ AMERICANS CAME FROM JANE RUSSEL. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT HER RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES SHE EXPLAINED ("OH WHEN YOU GET TO KNOW GOD HE'S A LIVING DOLL")

NOW MY PURPOSE IS NOT TO LAUNCH A PRIVATE OFFENSIVE AGAINST HOLLYWOOD, ~~ALTHOUGH I DO ENJOY IT~~, BUT RATHER ~~TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS THING~~ to ask: "What do we mean when we say God. Is it the same meaning as revealed in B. or one we have created? WE ARE HERE TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD, MILLIONS OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS ARE DOING THE SAME THING AT THIS TIME, TOMMOROW IS BASICALLY A CHRISTIAN CELEBRATION. ALL I ASK IS, ARE WE THINKING OF THE SAME BEING AS THE PSALMIST WHO THUNDEREED "KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD"? WE CANNOT SING OUR PRAISES TO A LIVING DOLL, OR TO THE MAN UPSTAIRS. WE MUST HAVE BETTER TERMS S

THAN THESE IF OUR THANKSGIVING IS TO ~~BE AT ALL MEANINGFUL~~ ANYTHING BUT A SHALLOW FESTIVAL OF INDULGENCE.

THEREFORE, BEFORE WE ~~PART~~ DEPART TONIGHT I INVITE YOU TO THINK ABOUT GOD, GOD THE ALMIGHTY, GOD THE CREATOR, THE GOD WHO IS INDESCRIBABLE LOVE.

GOD IS ALMIGHTY. THERE IS NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE THAT WE CAN EQUATE WITH THE POWER OF GOD.

GOD IS THE CREATOR. IT IS HE THAT HATH MADE US. EVERY THING THAT IS -TREES, HOUSES, MEN, WOMEN SKY, UNIVERSE, EVERYTHING HAS COME INTO BEING BECAUSE HE CREATED. THE WORLD DID NOT JUST HAPPEN, HUMANITY DID NOT EVOLVE BECAUSE OF A COSMIC ACCIDENT. THERE IS A MEANING AND LIFE GIVING FORCE BEHIND CREATION AND THAT IS GOD.

GOD IS LOVE. COULD IT BE ANY OTHER? COULD THERE BE A WORLD, TREES, FLOWERS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, CHILDREN AND HAPPINESS IF GOD WAS NOT LOVE.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT THESE IDEAS, YOU HAVE HEARD THEM BEFORE. BUT TONIGHT AS WE UNITE IN AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE WE MUST BEGIN AND END BY CONSIDERING TO WHOM ARE WE ADDRESSING OURSELVES? IT IS AN EMPTY AND SHALLOW THANKSGIVIVNG THAT IS NOT UNDERGIRDED BY A TRUE CONCEPTION OF, OUR GOD.

ENTER HIS GATES WITH THANKSGIVING AND HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE. BUT FIRST, KNOW THAT THE LORD ~~IS~~ IS GOD.

AMEN